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ABSTRACT

The public library in the town of Snowflake, Arizona, was administered for some years by a library technician under the supervision of a graduate professional librarian from the Snowflake Unified School District. When the technician departed, a decision was made to have the library board administer and run the library with the assistance of clerical staff. The Department of Library/Media Technology at Northland Pioneer College (NPC) provides the training for the Snowflake Library Board. The courses include "Introduction to Library Services," "Rural Public Library Survival Skills," and "Administration of the Small Public Library"; other courses emphasize assertiveness training, networking, interlibrary cooperation, and communication. A course in computer technologies for libraries is planned for the spring. These courses have been tailored for the individual needs of the Snowflake Public Library and have created an effective learning environment. Current developments include the appointment of a Snowflake Town Council representative to the library board, and the library has applied for Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) funding in the spring of 1991 for the construction of a new library facility. (MAB)

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SING A NEW SONG: A NEW APPROACH TO PUBLIC LIBRARY MANAGEMENT IN RURAL SNOWFLAKE, ARIZONA

by

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The town of Snowflake, Arizona, a Mormon community in Northeastern Arizona, has maintained a public library for many years. A town native, Bess Erickson, a Snowflake native and former librarian of the Snowflake High Schools was responsible for much of the library's development in its earliest years. Through Mrs. Erickson's efforts, local clubs and organizations took on the library as a service project. The most noteworthy of these is the Snowflake Woman's Club, an affiliate of the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

For many years, the library was part of the Navajo County Library, with its headquarters at the Roxanne Whipple Memorial Library in Winslow, until the county library was disbanded a few years ago, leaving Navajo County, Arizona, without a county library. The town of Snowflake has continued to provide much of the fiscal support of the library, and with a contract with the neighboring town of Taylor, library service is provided to both communities.

The Snowflake Public Library achieved a great deal of growth during the years that it was administered by a library technician, under the supervision of a graduate professional librarian who serves as the District Librarian for the Snowflake Unified School District. When the technician departed however, a decision was made to have the library board administer and run the library. Under this arrangement, a clerical staff would be provided.

The Department of Library/Media Technology at Northland Pioneer college was asked to provide training for the Snowflake Library Board. During the first semester, LIB 102 - Introduction to Library Services was taught, to give the board a broad background in library services. During the next year, two courses were

tailored to meet the board's needs. One was "Rural Public Library Survival Skills" and another was "Administration of the Small Public Library." Currently, courses are being taught which emphasize assertiveness training, networking and inter-library cooperation as well as communication. After the first semester, the courses were team taught by two of the staff members of the Department of Library/Media Technology at Northland Pioneer College. Plans for the spring include a course in computer technologies for libraries, as well as a course which will give academic training for on the job experience.

With no county library in Navajo County, library development has been anchored by the Department of Library/Media Technology at Northland Pioneer College and the Navajo County Library Consortium. The Department of Library/Media Technology is able to offer courses that are tailormade to meet the needs of individual libraries and/or communities.

As of this writing, the course offerings tailored for the Snowflake Public Library have been quite successful. Although the classes are small, students are eager to learn and a great deal has been accomplished. At a Snowflake Town Council meeting held in November 1990, students were able to convince the council that a council representative needed to be appointed to the town library board. In addition, the council voted to apply for LSCA funding in the spring of 1991 for the construction of a new library facility.

Because of the positive library climate in the communities of Snowflake and Taylor, a community-wide plan for total library service is in the making, with all libraries in the communities cooperating to the fullest extent possible.

Although asking the library board to assume the actual management function of a public library is certainly not the norm, this has worked for Snowflake because of the learning climate that has been created. In addition, the current employee who works as the librarian, will soon complete requirements for a Certificate of Applied Science in Library/Media Technology at Northland Pioneer College. She is gently assertive, with a magnetic, outgoing personality, and is very definitely one of the reasons that this approach has been successful.